

REMARKS

Claims 1-40 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1-30 stand withdrawn. Claims 31 and 32 are amended, and claims 33 and 34 are canceled.

Specification and Drawings

The drawings are objected to by the Examiner as allegedly failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(p)(5) because they do not include the following reference “B” mentioned in the Specification at page 34, line 3. Applicant hereby amends the Specification to remove the reference “B”. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw this objection.

Claim Objections

Claims 31-40 are objected to by the Examiner due to certain linguistic informalities. Claims 31 and 32 are amended accordingly. Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw this objection.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 31, 35, 37 and 39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Rimai et al. (US 6,556,798) in view of Hinotani et al. (US 5,546,173). Applicant traverses this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Claims 31 and 32 are amended to incorporate the features of allowable claims 33 and 34, respectively, putting all of claims 31, 32, and 35-40 in immediate condition for allowance. The Examiner indicated the allowability of claims 33 and 34 on page 7 of the instant Office Action.

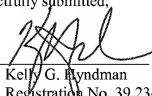
Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the allowance of independent claims 31 and 32, and their dependent claims 35-40.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Applicant herewith petitions the Director of the USPTO to extend the time for reply to the above-identified Office Action for an appropriate length of time if necessary. Unless a check is attached, any fee due under 37 U.S.C. § 1.17(a) is being paid via the USPTO Electronic Filing System (EFS). The USPTO is also directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Kelly G. Hyndman
Registration No. 39,234

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON DC SUGHRUE/265550

65565
CUSTOMER NUMBER

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